

True North Mine Project

Cumulative Impacts Analysis

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In response to:
Cumulative impacts issues raised by the public

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Cumulative Impacts Analysis

A cumulative impact is an impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Although the True North Mine would be one of only a relatively few lode mines in Alaska, its location in a historically important placer mining district requires its impacts be considered cumulatively in the context of mining in general in the central interior region of Alaska. In that context, the cumulative impacts that would result from development of the True North project would not be significant.

Regional Mill Concept

Development of the True North project would be the first step in implementing the concept of a "regional mill" at the Fort Knox Mine. Pursuant to this approach, FGMI would haul higher-grade ore from a "satellite deposit" to blend with ore from the very much larger but lower grade Fort Knox deposit. Such blending could have a substantial positive impact on the latter's economics by converting the currently marginal and sub-economic lower grade mineral resources at Fort Knox to an economic reserve; that is, mine life could be extended by making the large lower grade resource economic to mine and process.

The proposed True North project would mine ore from the Hindenburg and East pits. Three other prospects close to the Hindenburg and East deposits on the same property also might prove economic with additional exploration and drilling: Central, Zeppelin, and Sheppard. In addition to the True North prospect, Kinross and predecessor companies have expended substantial resources exploring and assessing the Ryan Lode at Ester, approximately eight miles northwest of Fairbanks and 40 road miles southwest of the Fort Knox Mill (Fig. 1). Other prospects in the region which Kinross owns outright, or in which it is a substantial owner, include Gil, approximately eight miles northeast of the Fort Knox Mill; Westridge/Steamboat, approximately four miles west-northwest; and Amanita, approximately five miles south southwest (Fig. 1).

In the case of True North, its approximately 10,000 tpd ore volume would account for approximately one-quarter of the Fort Knox Mill's daily supply. Because of the capital costs in developing satellite projects, including the trucks to haul to the Fort Knox Mill, it is unlikely that more than two satellite projects would operate simultaneously except during an overlap between projects starting up and closing down. A more likely scenario would be sequential development of satellites as long as there would be sufficient reserves of lower grade ore in the Fort Knox deposit.